

# CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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## Oakland

# STRIKE EXPOSES CAPITALIST EDUCATION IN CRISIS



**BAY AREA, June 7**—In the interest of the “common good” (read: pro-student and class-solidarity demands), over 3,000 education workers went on an eight-day strike against the Oakland Unified School District. Communists in the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) went to picket lines at schools where we knew striking teachers to build solidarity, raise class consciousness, and communicate communist ideas.

From May 4 to 15, these workers honored the picket line, 34,000+ students were out of schools, parents & students joined the picketing and rank-and-file teachers set up solidarity schools for younger children of working parents. A Temporary Agreement (TA) for 2.5 years was signed late Sunday night on the 7th day for a

return to school on Tues.

The school bosses used legal tactics to create planned Chaos, “delay, deny and blame the victim,” all typical strike-breaking tactics. The contract expired in Oct 2022. Finally, Oakland Education Association (OEA) called a strike in May due to unfair bargaining practices; a “legal” cover for immediate action rather than months of fact finding. This was after a rank-and-file caucus carried out a one-day wildcat strike in March, mainly in high schools, and demanded a 50-person bargaining committee to be responsible to the membership.

*Continued on Page 3*

### The strike’s demands go past the economist limits

The strike had two types of demands that addressed conditions for teachers and students. OUSD is one of the lowest paid districts in the Bay Area, had difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers, teachers and staff could not afford the cost of living in the areas where they worked, schools with the largest population of low-income Black, Brown, Indigenous, disabled/special needs students had the most unmet needs, had unhoused families & deteriorated School Building/physical plan.

One teacher said, “the school’s buildings are old and in need of renovation, that there’s lead in the soil and a rat and mice infestation in the classrooms, and that they’re concerned about lead in the water.” Years of school closings in these neighborhoods, Charter school privatization and Real Estate Profit-motivated displacement had increased these disparities and overcrowding.

1) Education workers address economic gains for the workers: wages, hours, benefits, retroactive payment for frozen wages, \$5,000 signing bonus, more support staff such as Nurses, librarians, Councilors; especially needed for the most marginalized students and underfunded schools. OUSD whined about a cost of \$70 million (ABC 7 News, 5/15).

2) “Common Good” demands expressing class solidarity: four were covered in Memorandums of Agreements (MOUs) which addressed the most marginalized students: a) School property used for unhoused and housing insecure students, b) shared governance for community schools, c) support for Historically Black Schools, and d) processes for school closures (CNN, 5/15).

## JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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## OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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### WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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## Editorial

# Turkey's crisis at the crossroads of imperialist superpowers



*Turkey has major geopolitical importance for imperialists as a critical bridge between Europe and Asia.*

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's hotly contested re-election highlights the country's internal crisis and its unstable position between imperialist super-powers. Erdogan's victory signifies a shift away from liberal democracy toward fascistic consolidation by Turkey's ruling class. With Erdogan's U.S.-backed opponent, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, failing in the runoff, it also reflects waning U.S. influence in a critical geopolitical region.

Runaway inflation (up to 84 percent last October), two devastating earthquakes, and a ballooning migrant crisis have put the Turkish economy on the brink of collapse. To contain workers' anger, the Turkish capitalist bosses are using Erdogan—now entering his third decade in power—to impose tighter control over the media, the judiciary, and a mostly powerless Turkish parliament. Since surviving a 2016 coup attempt, Erdogan has seized more executive power, sidelined political opponents, purged large sections of the government and military, and arrested hundreds of protesters (Al Jazeera, 7/15/22).

The struggles facing the working class in Turkey are a sobering reminder of the limitations and illusions of capitalist elections. The Progressive Labor Party is working to build communist working-class consciousness that rejects the dead end of electoral politics. By organizing and mobilizing the working class, we can build a revolutionary movement that smashes capitalism and builds a society to serve the needs of the international working class.

### Liberals are the main danger

Opposition candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu and his Republican People's Party painted themselves as champions of social reforms, the liberal alternative to the authoritarian Erdogan and his ultra-nationalist Justice and Development Party. But in a desperate move to defeat the incumbent, Kilicdaroglu won the endorsement of the gutter-racist, third-party candidate, Umit Ozdag, by promising to kick out millions of Syrian refugees (Turkish Minute, 5/24). Kilicdaroglu charged that Erdogan had failed to "protect Turkey's honor or borders" (Al Jazeera, 5/22). Both Kilicdaroglu and Erdogan accused the other of colluding with "terrorists," which translates to a push for more racist oppression of Kurdish workers.

In recent years, more workers in Turkey have been misled by these divisive racist appeals. Under the ruthless profit system, a society that creates a handful of winners and masses of losers, a lack of revolution-

ary class consciousness makes the working class vulnerable to racist and fascist ideas. In a volatile period with surging economic insecurity, liberal racists and open racists alike aim to exploit the frustrations of the working class and to channel their justifiable rage into scapegoating other workers. The liberals are especially dangerous in diverting class struggle away from the communist fight for state power and back to the strait-jacket of voting.

### Trapped in the middle

A critical bridge between Europe and Asia, Turkey under Erdogan is struggling to balance its own nationalist ambitions with the competing imperialists in Russia and the United States. The country has positioned itself as a major player in the region surrounding the Mediterranean and Black seas. It has recently pivoted toward Russia for military support and has engaged in negotiations to become a hub for a Russian gas pipeline (Al Jazeera, 10/14/22). But with its economy in shambles, Turkey will need more financial help from the United States and the European Union—or whoever else is willing to sign a big check.

After claiming neutrality in the war in Ukraine and acting to block Sweden from joining NATO, Erdogan may need to make concessions to get loans from the World Bank and prop up Turkey's collapsing economy (Bloomberg, 2/9). To get financing from the International Monetary Fund, he will need to raise interest rates and impose austerity measures that will impoverish and starve millions.

As the big powers lurch toward the next world war, workers in Turkey seem likely to be trapped in the middle.

### Fight for communism!

The plight of workers in Turkey cries out for more than mere reforms or empty promises by the rulers' politicians. Workers need a revolutionary communist movement that exposes the root causes of workers' economic, political, and social struggles, and that builds international class solidarity. Workers need an organization that fights for a society free from imperialist exploitation, racism, and sexism. By uniting under the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party, workers in Turkey can pave the way for genuine liberation and a brighter future for all. Join us as we organize this international communist movement!✊



# Rx: free healthcare from profit system

**New York City, May 31**—Almost 1,000 retired city workers from former blue-collar workers to clerical, teachers, professors, librarians, nurses, social workers, EMTs, firefighters and more packed the sidewalk outside of City Hall in the continuing struggle against forcing 250,000 retirees into a privatized for profit medicare coverage known as Medicare Advantage. Chants like “healthcare is a human right, fight fight fight” reflected the understanding that health insurance companies are not in business to provide healthcare; they are in business to make profits! Progressive Labor Party says that only in a communist society will healthcare be provided to all based on need rather than on ability to pay. Only then will hospitals, prescription drugs and medical care be free of the profit system.

The retiree health coverage struggle has been going on for over two years. The city bosses led by former KKKop Mayor Adams would like us to give up and accept a September change in our benefits. A gang of high paid labor misleaders called the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC), who act on behalf of the city bosses, cut this deal in secret meetings where retirees have no say. Many of the MLC leaders earn hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, many times more than the workers their unions are supposed to represent. These bought and paid for “leaders” will never give up their cushy union positions to fight for workers.

The Medicare Advantage plan shifts costs to retired workers. New copays for retirees may add up to \$1,500



*Communism means workers will run a free-from-profit society where we can provide free healthcare for all!*

per person per year for healthcare costs. This affects lower income retirees (mainly Black and Latin and women) the most, making it a racist and sexist plan. It will force many retirees to choose between needed medical care and high cost medicine or the costs of housing, food etc.

Although the tactics of filing court cases, asking lo-

cal city council politicians for support and threatening to vote out Mayor Adams builds faith in the system, getting our hands dirty doing the work of the mass movement allows PLers involved in the struggle to raise communist ideas with our friends in a number of union retiree groups and build ties with current workers who we call retirees in training.👊

## Oakland strike: capitalism’s racist attack on students

*Continued from page 1*

### What did we learn? What did we teach?

PLP went in solidarity with and to learn from the strikers: how did they view their struggle and the world that produced it? We learned that conditions in and out of the schools had many teachers talking about the problems of capitalism, but that they did not have a full explanation of “why are things so bad?”

We learned that the Oakland R&F Caucus understands working class power: “We are...committed to transforming the Oakland Education Association into a democratic, member-led union that fights for high-quality schools for all.”

One big lesson developed during the previous teachers’ strike in 2019 when teachers organized with members of the ILWU (International Longshore and Warehouse Union) to shut down the Port of Oakland. The California Teachers’ Association (CTA) sabotaged this action due to fear of being sued for a secondary boycott. Building on that experience, that’s when teachers led the wildcat strike.

During this strike, teachers shut down OUSD (Oakland Unified School District) construction of a new administration building costing \$57 million to point out the hypocrisy that \$57 million is needed to upgrade the schools, not produce a fancy building for the administration. Many construction workers on site supported this one-day shutdown). They kept the strikers informed on progress and mobilized parent support.

### Racism part and parcel of capitalism

The strike’s demands addressed conditions for teachers and students. OUSD is one of the lowest paid districts in the Bay Area, which creates difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers and staff. Schools with the largest population of working-class Black, Latin, immigrant, Indigenous, disabled and special needs students had the most unmet needs, had unhoused families and deteriorated physical plants. For example, one teacher said, “The school’s buildings” have “lead in the soil and a rat and mice infestation in the classrooms, and they’re concerned about lead in the water.”

Years of school closings, charter school privatization, and real estate profit-motivated displacement had increased these disparities and overcrowding in these neighborhoods. This goes along with imperialist-war related education cutbacks.

A district spokesperson said “the district has a total of \$3.4 billion in upgrades and other changes that must happen to get all schools upgraded and modernized.” OEA’s common good proposals are “far too costly for the district to handle” and should not be included in any collective bargaining agreement

(KQED, 5/12).

### Developing class consciousness

On the picket line, PLP members discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the reform struggle. We distributed CHALLENGE with a report from the Los Angeles teachers strike, and international news of class struggle to those who were interested and planned follow up activity after the strike. Many events in this strike showed that workers can organize figure out how to run things for the benefit of the whole working class where humans strive to collectively build a world of equity; based on production for need, not for profit. That system is communism. A teacher reported on the strike at our PLP May Day celebration.

One of our goals was to support and expand on the class consciousness in the “common good” demands. At one school, an AFSCME member struggled with coworkers to honor the picket line. Students from a solidarity school joined the picket line with their own chants. This was an opening to bring up the history of Industrial Unionism. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was founded with the leadership of the Communist Party USA that organized for everyone in an industry to be in the same union. In Oakland in 1947, transit worker solidarity with striking retail workers sparked a general strike.

Such history helped develop an understanding of capitalism’s stratified wage system using racism, sexism and anti-immigrant ideology. This lowers wages for all. These ideas made sense even though some teachers had never heard of the CIO.

### Imperialism and finance capitalism on display

Our PLP picket signs addressed the war budget, imperialism and privatization with charter schools increasing segregation. They were well received (see picture) and we had many conversations about the decline of U.S. capitalism, imperialist wars with rivals, mainly China, over control of labor, natural resources, markets, and even the threat of replacing the dollar as the world currency.

We brought up that finance capital has been moving into the public sector to secure tax money to make up for shrinking profits in other areas. Privatization includes charter schools, the testing industry, and an army of “private” consultants and NGOs (non government organizations).

The Wall St Journal directly attacked the teachers and belittled the “common good” demands: “the teachers’ union strike that is holding children hostage in the name of climate and housing for the homeless... How about “remedying the enormous learning deficits the union has caused by protecting bad teach-

ers and closing schools during the pandemic?” (WSJ, May 9).

We explained that the WSJ represents finance capitalists who understand the danger when workers move away from business unionism or electing Democrats to develop working-class solidarity social justice unions. This can unleash the united working class to challenge capitalist rule; like back in the day when communists developed class solidarity against capitalism and fought for communism.

### The role of liberal reformers

During the strike, we had the opportunity to discuss the role of the liberal reformers who led the vicious attack and echoed the call to exclude common good demands from the contract. Many teachers agreed that voting for a leader who is a lesser evil, has personal credentials including identity politics, is a deadend when that individual accepts the limits set by capitalists’ budgets.

Superintendent of OUSD Kyla Johnson-Trammell (salary \$452,500/yr) grew up an Oakland student, taught 25 yrs in OUSD, agreed with WSJ: teachers “should not hold children’s learning hostage or deprive students of the services that schools provide.” One teacher told us that a poster exposing Kyla was controversial since she is Black.

President of the Oakland School Board, Mike Hutchison, promotes himself as an “OEA Baby,” product of Oakland schools with his mother a OUSD teacher, and an organizer fighting school closings/ budget cuts. He attacked “items that are outside of the scope of the contract, which are basically compensation and work conditions, are not going to be negotiated... Common Good proposals... do not belong in the contract language...” (The Oaklandside, 5/8).

We discussed: Why do liberal politicians and leaders end up attacking working-class teachers and students? Is it personality? Ego? Many teachers recognized that the memorandum of understanding makes the OEA leadership a partner with OUSD to administer shrinking tax dollars that will continue to produce failed solutions to the issue of housing, school closing, community school funding, and racist conditions. We agreed with the activist teacher organizers that such a partnership would try to stop direct rank-and-file actions, like future wildcat strikes, or port shutdowns.

These partners could use corporate laws to justify firing, jailing, and legal suits for damages and school closures. Capitalism in decline won’t provide the money for an equitable education for the working class.

Capitalism attacks those who dare to struggle. Class solidarity and revolutionary potential grow when we dare to win! 🗡️

# Fighting bio racism, a feature of capitalist healthcare

**CHICAGO, IL, June 7**—“Ummm, it looks like there’s a room full of people behind you?” The head boss of the local health system sounded surprised and nervous when they saw the numerous supporters who came to the online meeting with U.S. kidney leaders. Getting rid of racist kidney lab tests had proven to be no easy task!

This meeting was supposed to be just the two leaders of our antiracism group and U.S. kidney leadership to explain the struggle in medicine to change decades of racism in biology. The head boss was not expecting us to bring the whole group! We had to show that the number of people determined to remove biologic racism from medicine was large and ready to act outside the usual standards of academia and business.

**A brief history of biologic racism**

Capitalism and racism go hand in hand, and at this stage of capitalism are so intertwined that it is impossible to imagine one existing without the other. Because the economic benefits of slavery were so great, the U.S. ruling class (especially slave owners) created and codified the idea of race and racism into laws. As historian Lerone Bennett describes in *The Road Not Taken* (link), the development of racism in the U.S. can be traced through laws deliberately created to separate and control workers. He notes that when Black and white workers united in an uprising against their masters in 1676 in Virginia (Bacon’s rebellion), the laws separating workers by race were dramatically strengthened. To justify their brutal system, they couldn’t tell the truth: “we need free labor to become rich and it is easy to identify the enslaved workers by the color of their skin.” Racist thinking thus permeated every facet of life including the science of medicine.

And so biologic racism was born. The ideas that there are biologic or genetic differences between races, and that the white race is superior, are lies. Biologic racism was used to justify slavery. Thomas Jefferson said that Black workers had “a difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus.” This falsehood was used to justify slavery because such forced labor was a way to “vitalize the blood” of supposedly deficient Black workers.

The false idea of biologic racial differences persists despite the fact that the human genome studies show that there are more genetic similarities between ra-

cial categories than differences. Antiracist doctors and other health workers including Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members are leading struggles against this biologic racism.

**The fight against biologic racism in kidney tests**

A PLP member developed a lecture on biologic racism for her coworkers and students. The ensuing discussions led to a proposal to get their hospital to remove race from analyzing laboratory tests for kidney disease. The Covid-19 pandemic put everything on pause--until the George Floyd uprisings by workers against his murder by the kkkops! The ripple effect of militant antiracist struggle moved people at the hospital to form a multiracial antiracism committee that was led by the PLP member.

Race has been included as a component of kidney testing in the United States since 1999. The data to support such inclusion was weak and the biologic claim to support the idea—that Black people have more muscle mass—is racist. Still, this is the way that kidney function has been calculated for over two decades and has resulted in Black patients being diagnosed with kidney disease later than whites and judged not eligible for transplant until they were sicker than their white counterparts.

The PLP member guaranteed that the meetings of this antiracist committee would be more collective than usual staff meetings. Every meeting began with a discussion of an article so that the team built a common base of knowledge. They struggled together to come to mutual understanding and agreement so that all committee members could give leadership to the campaign. The team wrote a paper on removing race from kidney tests, gathered signatures in support, gave lectures on the topic, and emailed their coworkers and friends. By the time this group had started collecting signatures, we knew more about how and why race was included in kidney testing than many kidney specialists!

The local hospital committee voted in support of removing race from kidney function, but this decision was then scrapped by kidney specialists who disagreed and/or wanted to wait for national kidney organizations to okay such a change. The hospital leadership called for a meeting with the two chairs of

the committee. Secretly we organized to make sure every member of our antiracist committee and coworkers would attend this meeting. When the camera was turned on at the beginning of the meeting to show 20 people in attendance, the bosses were not happy. When they tried to steer the meeting to the topics they wanted to discuss, we did not let the meeting proceed until our questions were answered. We had to be bold and confrontational backed by our 20 committee members. This meeting was a turning point. It showed the strength we had in numbers and our commitment to this change. When the national guidelines changed to be race-neutral one month later, our hospital was one of the first to apply them due to the work we had done.

Throughout this struggle, the PLP member challenged coworkers to understand the connection between racism and capitalism. There were many times the committee was tested by external forces and internal struggles, but PLP training in prior struggles helped advance this antiracist struggle. The antiracism committee is still fighting today and has gone on to succeed in removing race from lung testing, which previously has kept Black mine workers from getting compensation for Black Lung disease.

**The fight continues but needs to be broadened and sharpened**

The embedded nature of racism in healthcare will not be eliminated by making every medical test race-neutral. The structural racism built into capitalism to keep the working class divided and weakened is a much larger contributor to worse health outcomes for Black and brown workers. White workers suffer because a working class divided by race cannot fight back effectively for the health and health care they need.

The only way to end structural racism is to destroy capitalism. The billionaire bosses will never give up their wealth to create an equal society. They use structural racism and state violence to grow and maintain their wealth by any means necessary. We need to build a mass communist movement to lead a revolution to seize state power, also by any means necessary. Through communist revolution, we can end the structural racism and poverty that keeps the working class sick. Join PLP!🔥

**Wildfires a smoke signal for capitalism in decay**

June 7—As we go to press, wildfires are burning across six Canadian provinces and a territory and they’re still spreading, pouring more smoke throughout the Atlantic Coast as Code Red for air quality spread. The equivalent of 5 million football fields are on fire!

New York City is declared to have the worst air quality in the world today. One calculator suggested breathing in the air here for 24 hours is the same as smoking 22 cigarettes (Daily Mail, 6/7).

For almost 50 years, scientists have warned us about how global warming—climate change—will destroy our lives. But the bosses have slow-walked any reduction in carbon emissions, and now we are choking to death in Canada and the U.S. while the fossil fuel industry merrily takes its profits to the bank.

There are at least three phenomena that are caused by climate change: rising sea levels, heat waves and forest fires. High temperatures, which are typically not seen until the summer months in Canada, are causing dry conditions and allowing forest fires to break out and spread.

Even Canadian Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson said, “It is a simple fact that Canada is experiencing the impacts of climate change, including more frequent and more extreme wildfires, and the amount of forests burned by wildfire is projected to double by 2050 due to our changing climate, causing longer and more intense wildfire seasons, more extreme weather conditions and increased drought.”

A classic case of Nero (the bosses) fiddling while the working-class burns. It’s capitalism that deserves to go up in smoke, not the working class. Our very survival depends on fighting for communism and burning this vicious capitalist system down. The earth belongs to us, and with the working class in power, it will rise on new foundations.

## Smash sexist policies with communist revolution

The vicious racketeering and collusion charges, carrying up to a 12-year sentence, leveled by the Joe Biden administration against abortion rights organizers illustrates how the liberal ruling class is the greater danger to the working class. The antisexist’s crime? Spray painting.

The profit system requires maximum profit at all times. Workers are the ultimate source of profit. Every commodity is produced by a producer. Women workers produce the producers of everything. So, the need to produce workers to be bullet sponges is the context wherein we should understand the rising attacks on our working-class siblings and reproductive rights.

**Ruling class in crisis**

The first context is the 2007 financial crisis where the subprime mortgage collapse was the final straw. The ruling class bailed themselves out. Like in the Great Depression, the lowest birth rates were hit when the crisis of capital was in full tilt in the mid 1930’s. The key difference being that there was an international communist movement that had taken state power in the Soviet Union facilitating a powerful CPUSA (Communist Party USA) who was organizing among the working class. The New Deal was a direct response to the Red ‘30’s. So, this brings up the question of leadership.

Pacifism is a dangerous ideology to the working class. When one is silent, it makes the bully perpetuating the violence feel that they can continue on with it. The liberal ruling class and their state continues to attack working-class women, as well as undocumented and Black workers. They want us to be passive as groups actively attack workers stocking shelves with Pride merchandise.

The ruling class would like for the working class to believe that these parallels to Berlin in 1933 should be handled by them, because history shows us exactly how a liberal government handles growing fascist movements, so we know we need our own Progressive Labor Party (PLP)-led Red Army to smash them once and for all.

Unfortunately, history also shows us that fascism can

be decisively defeated by communists with great sacrifice and still not lead to an egalitarian society, so we need to fight for revolution and not reform.

The IMF (International Monetary Fund) postulates that “Policymakers in some advanced economies will need to tackle this trend [of a declining birthrate] and find ways to encourage women to have children. For example, increasing access to affordable and high-quality childcare, family-friendly labor laws, and tax policies” (IMF Blog, 11/13/18) and/or by actively rescinding abortion and reproductive healthcare.

**Reproduction and childrearing, a collective responsibility**

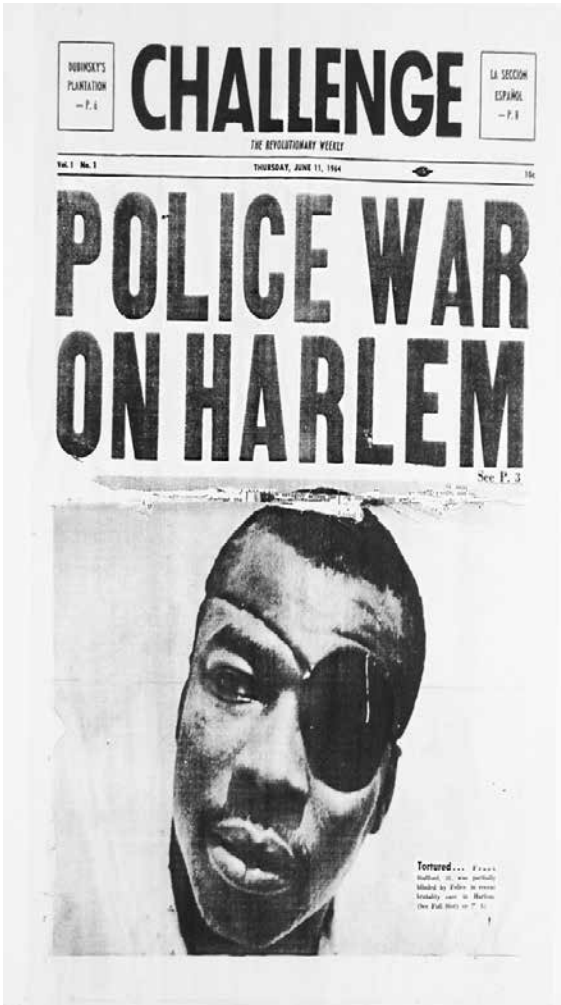
Under communism, Marx said that “sensuous human discourse” (Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844) would be the primary aspect of reproduction. In other words, we would learn how to actively work together to produce what we all need, with children being the responsibility of the whole of society. Instead of any of the identities that are so important to the modern liberal movements, we would struggle to allow for human beings to be who they actually are and love who they choose since there would be plenty of nurturing to go around. The whole human race would be a whole human family.

When the working class takes hold of ideas, they can then turn them into reality. It is the power of the working class being held in the prison of capitalist ideology that allows for the profit system to continue. When the Florida Attorney General points out that she is attacking Antifa and Jane’s Revenge, what she is really worried about is exactly what the Biden big bosses are afraid of, too, and that’s a communist organization being able to actively coordinate and lead attacks on the fascists, and, ultimately, on the bourgeoisie themselves to take hold of the means of production. We need the working class to wake up to the need for communist revolution. This requires patient organizing in mass organizations with the intent of building a mass international Party whose breadth balances being a secret to the bosses while being seen as the bulwark to the working class. 🔥



# First Cover: ‘Police War on Harlem’

*The two stories below are excerpts from the late Walter Linder’s memoir, A Life of Labor and Love. Wally was a founding member of Progressive Labor Party and passed away on January 3, 2022 at the age of 91, after a lifetime of principled struggle on behalf of the international working class. In addition to being a leader for the working class in school and on the job, he served as an editor and contributor to CHALLENGE, and to the Magazine of Progressive Labor Party.*



## 59th Anniversary of the workers’ paper

The first issue of CHALLENGE (Vol. 1, No 1) came out on June 15, 1964. When we sold that first issue of CHALLENGE, most of us had no idea how significant it was AND the role that CHALLENGE would soon play in the fight against capitalism. The headline on page one was prophetic: Police War on Harlem. Barely four weeks later, the Harlem Rebellion started after racist KKKop Thomas Gilligan of the New York Police Department (NYPD) shot and killed young James Powell who, with his friends, was trying to cool off from the July heat by spraying water on themselves and a bystander who complained about it and eventually called the police. This killing was the last straw in a long series of racist oppression. The news media called the rebellion a “riot” but it was most definitely a rebellion! Most of the stores that were attacked were pawnshops that had been looting the residents of Harlem for decades!

The Progressive Labor Movement (PLM), which became the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) in April 1965, put out its most significant (and briefest!!) leaflet: Wanted for Murder - Gilligan the Cop. Rebels carried the leaflet all over Harlem. The PLM couldn’t print enough of them!! ALL of the so-called “Black leaders” had the same false message: Go home and Pray ... don’t fight back!! But the NYC bosses knew exactly who to attack; the Harlem rebels and the PLM. So-called “free speech” went out the window. In essence, martial law was declared.

On a personal note, I sold the first issue of CHALLENGE in three locations: The Upper West Side of Manhattan, the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and the Garment District in Manhattan. The PLM held weekly rallies in the Garment District and CHALLENGE was a big help in getting our message out. We sold CHALLENGE on the street to the garment workers and when the boss wasn’t around, we went inside the shops where we could talk more extensively to several workers simultaneously. Unfortunately, most of us (maybe ALL of us) didn’t understand anything about base building so we didn’t get workers’ names.

That’s a key lesson for our newer members: ALWAYS get names so you can stay in touch and follow up with as many people as possible. That’s key to building the Party.

The police and sanitation departments harassed us while we sold CHALLENGE. They gave me quite a few tickets for supposedly “littering.” After my first ticket, the PLM got me a lawyer who taught me what to say at my trial. After my second ticket, I no longer needed a lawyer; I could defend myself and I did so!

CHALLENGE was the only newspaper, magazine, or TV and radio station that told the truth about the Harlem Rebellion, as well as the many other rebellions in Black neighborhoods throughout the U.S. The summer of 1964 made it very clear who were the sellouts and who supported the working class. Every one of us should do their utmost to ensure that CHALLENGE continues to be a working-class beacon that will help workers to understand the oppressive nature of capitalism AND the only solution to its miseries: COMMUNIST REVOLUTION!

was within his rights to print any newspaper brought to him.

“What about freedom of the press?” he shot back at the cops’ threat. He was not about to abandon his only account. Years later, when Mr. Chan retired, our search for another printer led us to Brooklyn and Ballan Printing, a company that printed many small community and campus papers—and a huge number of pornographic ones that had sprung up since the 1960s. (The Mafia, in collusion with the owners, had coerced the workers into a local union it controlled.) But neither the owners nor the Mafia counted on the workers’ rebelliousness.

The workers read our paper and saw the various exposés we wrote about the lousy working conditions that profit-hungry bosses were pushing on workers throughout the country.

When we went to pick up the paper, the workers showed us the horrible condition of what passed for their bathroom and asked us to write about it. Our editor Luis Castro wrote an exposé for the next issue, which the workers read with enthusiastic approval.✿



*Black workers march in Harlem (1964), holding wanted poster of killer kkkop Giligan*

## The workers embrace CHALLENGE

In June 1964, the Progressive Labor Movement decided to print an eight-page weekly newspaper; CHALLENGE was born. Our search for a printer led us to an outfit in Trenton, N.J.

After laying down a deposit, the printer looked at the first issue and told us that would be the last one he’d print.

We called up the Harris offset press manufacturer and asked for a list of newspaper printers to whom it had sold web offset presses. That’s how we found the Sun Publishing Co., located in the Chinese community on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. We showed our first issue to the owner, Mr. Chan, and he agreed to print our newspaper. His wife and kids helped with various tasks. Milt Rosen, PLM chairperson, and I packed the papers into boxes for pick-up.

As it happened, later that month the Harlem rebellion erupted, during which the rebels were holding the front page of CHALLENGE as their flag while marching. This prompted the NYPD Red Squad to visit Mr. Chan and warn him that if he continued to print our paper he would be in for trouble. Chan told them he

When the bosses saw the article, they went wild. They told us it was all lies and one-sided and challenged us to print their side, “the truth.” We told them that there was only one “truth,” the “workers’ truth,” which made them even crazier. From then on, they scrutinized every issue. Soon afterwards, the owners renovated the bathroom into a halfway decent condition.

The workers attributed that improvement to the article we had written. When a pre-May Day issue came out, we printed the words of the workers’ anthem, “The Internationale.” When we went to pick up that issue, a pressworker suddenly leapt up the two flights of stairs to the top of the huge web press and in a clear, loud voice began singing “The Internationale.”

As the strains of the final words, “the International working class shall be the human race,” drifted across the pressroom, the workers spontaneously burst into applause.

We never found out how this worker knew the song’s melody, but news of the performance soon traveled to the far reaches of Brooklyn. We are now in our [59]th year of publishing CHALLENGE, and have never missed an issue.✿

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.



Neither education bosses nor union misleaders care about students

There's a reason why the club is the most important part of the Progressive Labor Party. It is the collective that we need in order to do the important work that we do. As soon as the teachers union in our city put out an email saying that they were having actions as a reaction to the Department of Education (DOE) putting out a calendar that stripped holidays away from kids and forced us into what almost amounts to a sixth class, we knew that the sellout was underway.

As soon as the email was sent, comrades in a club contacted each other. They discussed what was going on as far as the context of the DOE putting out a calendar with no regard for the negotiations with the union. This conversation then focused on answering the question of how this attack on the teachers was also an attack on students. Increasing the amount of time that students are in school, though it appears to be an improvement, is actually an attack on students by grinding them down with more work. Now, the fact that there would be a uniform starting time of 8 am would wreak havoc on bussing the neediest students. This is all a part of the need for the bosses to build fascism as they increase the workload their parents have.

The bargaining pattern that the teacher's union is following is the union that represents the hardest hit of the working class: laborers who are primarily women, Black, and Latin. They are jumping the gun and grabbing the deal the liberal bourgeoisie demands.

Conversations the next day with coworkers were sharp as the comrades were fresh from the collective discussion that focused them on how it was an attack on students and why the bosses were attacking now. One comrade sat down in the teachers center and wrote a chapter update with several teachers, struggling with each one to see the current issue within the context of class struggle and the union misleaders as servants of the bourgeoisie.

The rumors were that the contract was a done deal and that the whole fight the union was putting up was a smoke screen to help the teachers take a terrible deal and call it a victory. The union bosses are creating this whole façade to help them sell us a contract that will likely attack our students by speeding them up and increasing their hours; attack our healthcare because keeping us alive is too expensive; and give us an inflation-affected, pennies on the dollar raise.

It is the collective working together and sharing of understanding that allows the Party to be able to struggle with our coworkers and against the bosses. The next step is to continue to discuss this attack with our students, their parents, and continue to do so with teachers through Chapter Updates and any means we have at our disposal. And let's not forget the fight for communism where workers will really be educated about how capitalism works and how to get rid of it with communist revolution.

In Atlanta, more than 100 people from all over the U.S. gave over 15 hours of public comment to the local City Council against a huge cop training facility, better known as Cop City. The Black, Asian, Muslim and nonbinary council members still voted yes to expanding police terror and fascism through the 90 million dollar project. This is what the Party means by liberal fascism.

The case of organizers fighting through the system and being denied is what it looks like. Placing liberals and marketing them as friendly faces in the highest offices is not enough for the ever growing masses of workers that are turning to militant fightback over the ballot boxes. The U.S. and worldwide infrastructure from schools to roadways are crumbling. The bosses need police to keep workers repressed, terrorized and focused on the ploy to blame themselves and each other for the circumstances brought on by a profit driven system.

★★★★★

**Cop city = liberal fascism**

Cop City is in response to what was the largest mass antiracist protest that spurred from George Floyd and Breonna Taylor's vicious murders by kkkops. The fight around #STOPCOPCITY is one of the most critical struggles that we must not only keep our eyes on but expand in every city. Because there is a training ground for cops and military that's being built or expanded in every city. And building up the capabilities of the police and military is the liberal ruling class' plan as the system of capitalism becomes more unstable. Liberal politicians in Atlanta, Newark, L.A., Chicago, Mexico, Colombia are the ones side by side with the corporations funding the war and the police waging it. As communists in the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), use the case of organizers trying to stop Cop City as a reason for why revolution will never be on the ballot and must be enacted by communist fighters in one mass internationalist Party. Our class needs leadership, our friends are learning from us and our children are watching. Let's fight for each other and fight together!

★★★★★

**poetry vs. alienation under capitalism**

I wrote this poem with all the rage I had after being humiliated by the boss at my workplace for being gay. I was told that I had to censor myself to respond to the sensitivities of anti-gay sexism of people at the workplace. People in solidarity with me had to witness this.

*Fatality*

*The leader who misunderstands his understanding*

*Of his own alliances*

*With the system that is making him a weapon against the ghost of his own better ideals*

*Long ago sold to his masters*

*Exposed and corroding*

*Tragedy*

*Not the worker who was made to choke*

*On the pride & joy of sharing how they exist*

*In response*

*To the attack, the shame, the guilt*

*Of others' prejudice and bigotry*

*Pitiful*

*The liberal boss who says they seek justice*

*In equally protecting the right of people*

*With violent ideas*

*Of having double standards*

*Not thinking twice of the intent*

*Emanating from white bodies,*

*or heterosexual bodies*

*While being trained to fire the bullet of guilt without hesitation on bodies of darker skin, on feminine bodies*

*Fanning the flames of division and distrust*

*Within the working class to distract...*

*Better than any open fascist can*

*And retaining the power of their terror concealed*

*Misfortune*

*The educator who hides their own lack of confidence in the working class...behind*

*Respect for cultural populations whose bigoted ideas "unfortunately cannot be changed"*

*When in reality it is their own racist limitations that hold them hostage from fighting for what is better*

*Optimism*

*Those who surpassed a new limit*

*In the courage and action*

*They were willing to undertake*

*In standing side by side*

*With workers being attacked*

*For fighting to put all power*

*In the hands of the working class*

*Forward*

*The people whose solidarity with the working class has forever changed*

*When being pierced by being witness to the visceral pain of a fellow worker who has been attacked*

*While the bosses seek the justice that serves themselves*

*In the spiritual lynchings they unleash*

*On the spirit of the fighters ready to expose their masters*

*Victory*

*To the communists*

*Who are lodging confidence*

*Deeper and deeper*

*within the working class*

*By turning painful attacks*

*Into fights*

*And never losing sight*

*Of what is the win*

*Up against the terror the bosses use*

*To have us see everything but that*

★★★★★

GLOSSARY:  
COMMUNIST  
TERMS

**Fascism**

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next inter-imperialist war.

**Big Fascists**

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war, most likely with China.

**Small Fascists**

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They use open racism to build a political following.



# Speech calls out wage theft

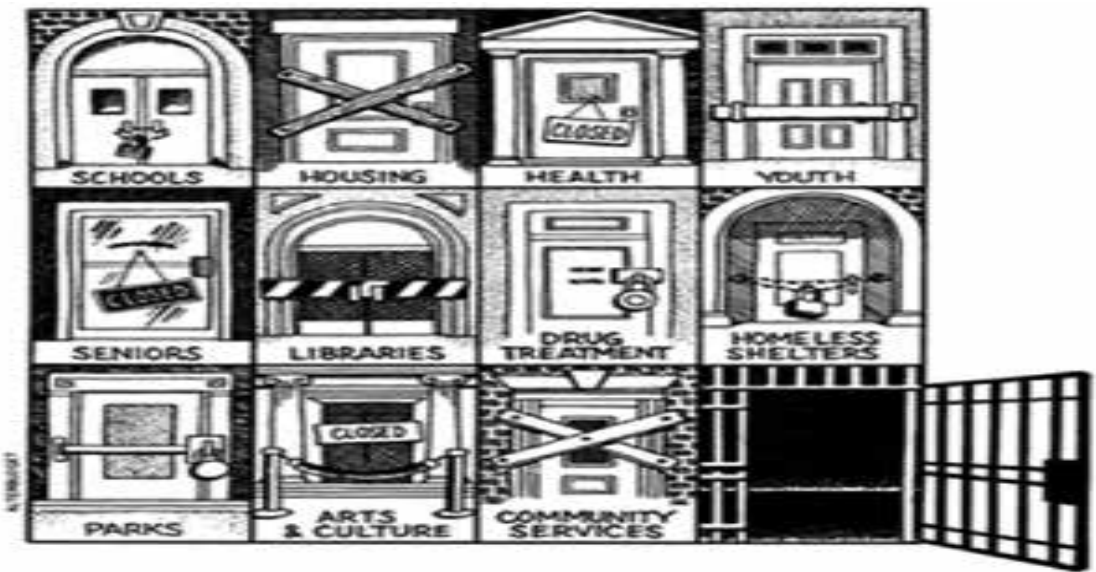
The following letter is a testimony given by a comrade in support of the Securing Wages Against Theft (SWEAT) bill at a New York State legislative hearing. Annually billions of dollars are stolen from workers in New York City alone. Loopholes in the state rulers' laws make it easy for bosses to ruthlessly steal from workers and hide their assets in such a way that makes it nearly impossible for workers to recover their stolen wages. Antiracist organizers are fighting for a lien law that freezes criminal bosses' assets.

If won, the SWEAT law may give workers the tools to recover their stolen wages, but it will never change the fact that capitalism is a criminal system and exploitation is its bedrock. All waged work under capitalism is exploitation. Profits are extracted from the necessary unpaid labor time of workers, and wage theft only deepens this contradiction. The Wage theft epidemic we're currently experiencing is a symptom of a system that is spiraling further into crisis. Ultimately, workers must fight for a communist revolution to put an end to this racist super exploitation.

The SWEAT bill is currently under attack by a powerful restaurant boss lobby called the Hospitality Alliance courtesy of its liberal fascist lackeys in Albany. Workers plan to protest Melba Wilson, a Black celebrity restaurant owner who fronts the racist Hospitality Alliance, later this month. Please look out for an article on this fightback in the next coming issues of CHALLENGE.

I'm speaking on behalf of Women Against Racist Violence (WARV) a multiracial collective of young people, organizing to address the racist violence that women experience daily in forms such as the 24 hour workdays, wage theft, and displacement. I'd like to share our perspective on wage theft along with a personal anecdote.

In my early 20s I worked at a bar where I was promised cash payments at the end of each night. After eight hours of work, the manager tells me that he can only pay me if I get male customers to buy a certain amount of drinks. I noticed that many of the girls around me were roped into this line of work, to accept being groped by drunken men out of necessity. Many had children or were undocumented. I walked out of there with \$5 for a metrocard. I can't describe how violated and worthless I felt that night.



It was only years later till I began organizing with the Sweat Coalition and also with home attendants, hearing about their harrowing stories of wage theft that I was able to make sense of what me and many of my colleagues endured.

Every year bosses steal billions from workers and our state turns a blind eye and their zero response leads many to believe that wage theft is a victimless crime and that bosses can freely get away with stealing from workers. What's the use of calling wage theft or a crime if it goes unpunished?

Part of the problem lies in how our perspective on what constitutes a crime sometimes ends up trivializing the issue. It doesn't capture the suffering and generational aftershocks that this crime causes. Wage theft destroys worker's lives, their families, and their communities. I think we need to start calling wage theft what it is: racist violence.

Let me break it down if you think this is hyperbole. Every paycheck that is stolen from a worker is a step closer to starvation and homelessness. What is this if not violence? Every paycheck stolen from a woman is a step closer to staying in an abusive relationship to survive. What is this if not violence? Every paycheck stolen is a step closer to a worker landing in prison for committing a crime out of desperation.

In the South Bronx, one of the poorest congressional districts in the United States, where many of the home attendants I work with live and where wage stealing agencies operate — every 13 hours stolen from a home attendant each year means money deprived from them and their families, impacting their ability to afford education, housing and other necessities. This traps our kids and communities in a cycle of racist violence of poverty.

Perhaps this is why I'm so infuriated today. Wage theft continues unabated because politicians are too immobilized by bloodsucking sweatshop bosses to end this violence. They've been duped by unethical and shameful organizations like Hospitality Alliance, against their better judgment, to believe lies about how workers will abuse SWEAT and file false claims.

In the era of #metoo we're told to believe all victims of abuse, that is unless they've had their wages stolen and dare to speak out.

Shame on Hospitality Alliance for using their Black celebrity president as cover for their racist crimes. If politicians have a shred of integrity they'd stop listening to Hospitality Alliance, and pass SWEAT and be part of the solution to violence rather than an obstacle.✪



## RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

### Liberal bosses move further toward fascism in Atlanta

The Intercept, 5/31—...a heavily armed Atlanta Police Department SWAT team raided a house in Atlanta and arrested three of its residents. Their crime? Organizing legal support and bail funds for protesters and activists who have faced indiscriminate arrest and overreaching charges in the struggle to stop the construction of a vast police training facility — dubbed Cop City — atop a forest in Atlanta. In a joint operation with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, or GBI, Atlanta cops charged Marlon Scott Kautz, Adele Maclean, and Savannah Patterson — all board members of the Atlanta Solidarity Fund — with “money laundering” and “charity fraud.”

A total of 42 activists are currently facing state domestic terror charges on the flimsiest of police claims, while three others face hefty felony intimidation charges for distributing flyers that named a police officer connected to the brutal police killing of 26-year-old forest defender Manuel “Tortuguita” Terán.

### Proxy war in Somalia continues

France24, 6/4—Some 54 Ugandan peacekeepers died when militants besieged an African Union base in Somalia last week, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni said, in one of the worst recent attacks by Al-Shabaab jihadists in the war-torn country...The toll is one of the heaviest yet since pro-government forces backed by the AU force known as ATMIS launched an offensive against Al-Shabaab last August.

Al-Shabaab, which has been waging a deadly insurgency against Somalia's fragile central government for more than a decade, claimed responsibility for the May 26 attack, saying it had overrun the base and killed 137 soldiers...The militants drove a car laden with explosives into the base in Bulo Marer, 120 kilometres (75 miles) southwest of the capital Mogadishu, leading to a gunfight, local residents and a Somali

military commander told AFP...In a report to the UN Security Council in February, UN chief Antonio Guterres said 2022 was the deadliest year for civilians in Somalia since 2017, largely as a result of Al-Shabaab attacks.

### Analysis of war preparations in China and in U.S.

Der Spiegel, 6/2—George Yeo, the former foreign minister of Singapore, discusses the ongoing power struggle in the Pacific region...China is on its way to becoming the world's biggest economy. It will be a comprehensive power and the United States feels threatened by it. It sees a threat to its global dominance and is trying everything to slow down China, and even to bring it down if possible.

China's push towards nuclear weapons has to do with its need for a second-strike capability, i.e. the possibility of responding to a nuclear attack with a counter-strike. The Chinese know that the U.S. wants to deny them this ability. The U.S., on the other hand, senses that without its nuclear deterrent capability, China is likely to prevail in a conventional war over Taiwan. So they want to be able to threaten China with a nuclear attack...one of the reasons why there is so much interest in the South China Sea. Not so much because of the freedom of navigation, which has never been an issue, but because of submarine warfare. China's view is: Let's assume our opponent can locate every one of our ballistic-armed nuclear submarines. Well, then I'll increase my warhead count from 500 to 1,000, maybe even to 1,500. Because even if the other side destroys 95 percent of them, I'll still have some to hit back with.

### U.S. workers are not doing well

AJPH, 6/1—Increases in U.S. life expectancy slowed from 1950 to 1954 and 1955 to 1973, accelerated from 1974 to 1982, and progressively deteriorated from 1983 to 2009, 2010 to 2019, and 2020 to 2021 (–0.97



This Fred Wright cartoon from the 1970s has been updated to reflect increases in corporate profits, prices, and wages over the past year.

years/annum). Other countries experienced faster growth in each phase except 1974 to 1982. During 1933 to 2021, 56 countries on 6 continents surpassed US life expectancy. Growth in U.S. life expectancy was slowest in Midwest and South Central states...The U.S. life expectancy disadvantage began in the 1950s and has steadily worsened over the past 4 decades. Dozens of globally diverse countries have outperformed the United States. Causal factors appear to have been concentrated in the Midwest and South.

# SHARPENING CLASS STRUGGLE TOWARDS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION



*The following is part 1 of a report given at the Abolitions Conference (May 6-8) in Washington, DC.*

As a Metro transit worker in DC and a member of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689 representing over 10,000 bus operators, train operators, mechanics, custodians, landscapers of Metro, and hundreds of paratransit workers, I wanted to share thoughts about building a revolutionary movement in my workplace.

I was a shop steward and executive board member at my bus garage for six years and a member of the Progressive Labor Party, a revolutionary communist organization. We workers have been frustrated for decades in fighting racism, sexism, and exploitation in our industry. The system we face is rigged against us at every turn. That’s why we have to go beyond reform and join and build a revolutionary party that can both strengthen the labor movement day to day while developing the movement and institutions to overthrow the entire capitalist/imperialist system and build a communist world of equality and collectivity.

For many, this idea seems far-fetched. Some feel that capitalism cannot be defeated in the U.S. But never forget that famous comment from Rosa Luxemburg, the German revolutionary: “Before a revolution happens, it is perceived as impossible; after it happens, it is seen as having been inevitable.” Capitalism is an inherently unstable system, generating wars among the imperialists like today’s increasingly volatile conflicts among the U.S./NATO, Russia, and China and economic crises savaging workers’ well being globally. Communism is the solution to all of capitalism’s attacks.

### The contradictions of the labor movement

The labor movement in the U.S. has historically embodied the conflict between reform and revolution. The 19th century Chicago Central Labor Council favored the abolition of capitalism and at the same time campaigned for the 8-hour day. The Haymarket Affair, with a general strike and substantial militancy, was attacked by the police, and the leading revolutionary figures of Chicago’s labor movement were executed by the government for fighting against capitalism. But their example inspired the launch of May Day as the international working-class revolutionary holiday a few years later and inspired global revolutions involving billions of workers.

Other parts of the early labor movement also took a revolutionary approach, including the International Workers of the World (IWW), the early Socialist Party, and the Communist Party USA, through its powerful leadership role in the new industrial unions of the 1930s. But then as now, unions function within a capitalist framework and their leaders often refuse to go beyond simple business unionism. We must return to the days of labor militancy and create an open communist presence that points the finger at capitalism as the racist, sexist, killer of workers that it is.

### Transit unions and struggle

The ATU is in a period of growth as more workers are joining us to secure collectively bargained contracts through strikes and other labor actions. We communists are trying to use today’s momentum to build communist leadership in the labor movement to abolish capitalism/imperialism with communist

revolution.

Unions as creatures of the capitalist system are structurally limited to negotiate the terms of workers’ exploitation. So even if you do that militantly and in an antiracist fashion, if you aren’t also about building a party to destroy capitalism, then all you are doing is trying to get better terms for your exploitation.

Consider, though, both the potential power and limitations of the labor movement. The workers in major industries such as transportation have the power to stop production and the flow of profits to the capitalists and with communist leadership can galvanize the entire working class to seize power from the bosses.

This power has been recognized and feared by the ruling class. They have dealt with this by agreeing, in key industries, to pay higher wages and give better benefits, reducing to some degree union workers’ material interests in class struggle. The ruling class has also passed laws making it harder for unions in this country to strike through no strike clauses and no solidarity (“secondary boycotts”) strike clauses. Similarly, the capitalist system encourages union leadership positions to be paid much more than other workers, and are seen by some self-interested workers as a way to get out of driving a bus or turning a wrench.

Workers’ power has thus been dramatically hurt by the lack of communist leadership. Efforts by the U.S. ruling class to channel workers outrage into the Democratic Party has weakened class consciousness and militancy. Union leaders have largely abandoned serious strikes. When workers demand strikes, the union leadership and politicians undermine these efforts as quickly as possible. Without disciplined communist leadership, such rank-and-file movements get misdirected and sold out. Without a class analysis of companies extracting profit from the workforce, unions can be quick to settle for “good enough” contracts. Without fighting racism and getting involved in larger societal issues, unions can end up supporting the idea of more police to enforce fare evasion. Without a broader analysis of international politics, unions can be won to supporting imperialist war efforts.

### Communists are key to reversing union reformism

A determined core of revolutionary fighters can turn this around. They can make unions become leaders of multiracial fight back, a key to abolishing capitalism.

Based on over a decade of organizing at Metro, I know that workers can be won to the analysis that a disciplined party is necessary to overthrow capitalism. In fact, as a result of our Party’s engagement in decades of militant campaigns and strikes (that are the subject of next issue’s part 2 of this article), we have been able to swell the ranks of our Party group in our transit union. Despite the setbacks in the struggle for reform due to conservative union leaders, we have succeeded by painstakingly building the core of an organization at Metro that can respond to the looming crises of capitalism. We will respond with more militancy, more antiracist unity, and more leadership for communist revolution in the U.S. that will crush our exploiting bosses and their state – permanently – with communist workers power. ✖

### WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday, June 16.

Send to [desafio.challenge@gmail.com](mailto:desafio.challenge@gmail.com). For some guidance and house style rules, please go to [www.bit.ly/338ZJow](http://www.bit.ly/338ZJow)

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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